

Remarks

Support for the amendment to claim 6 can be found in the specification on page 2 of the specification, which states,

In conjunction with the lambda probe control device [the lambda probe] determines over the entire length of the lean-fuel operating phase the increase in the amount of oxygen in the exhaust gas flow and over the entire length of the rich-fuel operating phase the decrease in the amount of oxygen in the exhaust gas flow in each instance in relation to a specified oxygen amount reference value.

Claim 1 relates to an exhaust system wherein by means of a single lambda probe, in conjunction with the lambda control device, the increase in the amount of oxygen in the exhaust gas flow is determined over the entire period of the lean-fuel operating phase and the decrease in the amount of oxygen in the exhaust gas flow is determined over the entire period of the rich-fuel operating phase, in relation to a specified oxygen amount reference value, an oxygen-dependent threshold switching value being specified which, when reached, causes switching of the lambda control device to the respective other area of operation.

According to Column 9, lines 14 – 38 and column 4, lines 29 – 39, Köhler only employs a lambda sensor to detect a transition from a lean air/fuel mixture to a rich air/fuel mixture. According to Köhler, such a transition means that the catalytic converter no longer releases sufficient oxygen and the storage catalytic converter is, therefore, discharged. Köhler does not determine an increase in the amount of oxygen in the exhaust gas flow, as required by claim 1. Moreover, Köhler does not employ a specified oxygen amount reference value in relation to which an oxygen-dependent threshold switching value is specified.

Figure 1 is reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience. Determining a threshold switching value (U_1 and U_2) in relation to the reference value (U_0) allows the claimed invention to determine both the increase and the decrease in the amount of oxygen in the exhaust gas flow. Köhler is only concerned with detecting a decrease in the amount of oxygen. Köhler is not concerned with determining an increase in the amount of oxygen. Köhler does not specify a reference value, such as U_0 .

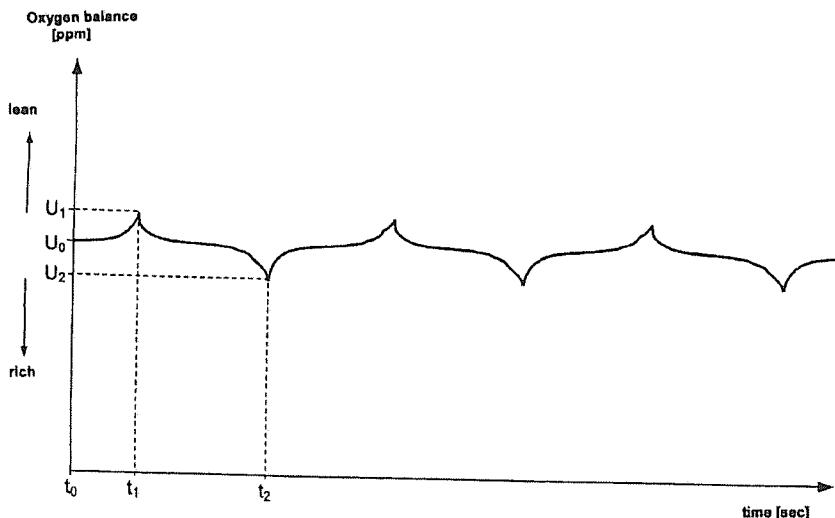


Fig. 1

Claim 6 relates to a method including switching the internal combustion engine from a lean-fuel operating range to a rich-fuel operating range or from a rich-fuel operating range to a lean-fuel operating range, when, in relation to a specified oxygen amount reference value, an oxygen-dependent threshold switching value is measured by said lambda probe. As discussed above, Köhler provides no reference value. More specifically, Köhler does not employ a specified oxygen amount reference value in relation to which an oxygen-dependent threshold switching value is measured.

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees filed, asserted to be filed, or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account 14-1437. Please credit any excess fees to such account.

NOVAK DRUCE & QUIGG, LLP
1300 Eye St. N.W.
Suite 1000 West
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 659-0100
Facsimile: (202) 659-0105

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Respectfully submitted,

Michael P. Byrne

Peter N. Lalos
Registration No. 19,789
Michael P. Byrne
Registration No. 54,015

Attorneys for Applicants